

# Experts ask for community involvement in oil projects

By Edward Kayiwa

Former principal judge, James Ogoola has advised the Government to involve all affected communities along the crude oil pipeline to Tanga in Tanzania in the project designs for it to be implemented successfully and effectively.

He said sidelining the communities may fuel corruption, cause delays and legal injustices and eventually cause civil upheaval, communal mayhem, unrest, protests and delays, as well cost both Uganda and Tanzania unwanted delays.

During a stakeholders workshop organised by Oxfam International at the Lake Victoria Hotel in Entebbe on Wednesday, Ogoola said landowners in host communities and all other stakeholders should be accorded fairness, equality and justice during compensation for their property for the transaction to be truly successful.

"There is merit of the states to seek to implement this project, but it requires a lot of land and getting it without community involvement runs counter to their civil entitlements of fair, adequate and prompt compensation," he said.

Ogoola said Uganda and Tanzania must respect long-standing cultural values and sites within the corridor that are worthy of recognition, before construction of the pipeline kicks off.

The 1,445km project, set for completion by 2020, will stretch from Hoima in south-western Uganda, where crude reserves were discovered in 2006, to Tanzania's Indian Ocean seaport of Tanga.

The \$3.55b (sh12.78 trillion) project will become the longest electrically heated crude oil pipeline in the world and is expected to create



Ogoola and lands minister Betty Amongi during the workshop at Lake Victoria Hotel in Entebbe on Wednesday

## ABOUT THE PIPELINE

In May 2017, President Museveni and his Tanzanian counterpart, John Pombe Magufuli, signed the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Agreement (EACOP) to pave way for construction of the pipeline.

The agreement was signed almost a year after Uganda opted for the Tanga route instead of Lamu in Kenya. Construction of the pipeline is expected to take shape in 2018 and is planned to be finalised by 2020.

approximately 10,000 jobs during the construction phase.

### Protecting ecosystem

Ogoola said vibrancy of the ecosystem, such as fishing ponds and hunting grounds within the pipeline corridor should also be protected.

"We all know that development must take place, but we must ask the fundamental question: Are we developing for the investor, the state or the entire population? If it is for the population, then they must not be excluded

from the process. Any so-called development that excludes the people will only lead to inequality, poverty and injustice," Ogoola said.

According to the state minister for health, Sarah Opendi, mapping of the corridor is almost complete and the Government will soon gazette it to avoid speculators.

She said although the corridor was initially expected to stretch 133 metres in width, the Government is considering expanding the width to accommodate communication

cables, optic cables, a dual highway and transmission line.

### Guidelines set

Opendi said the Government has put in place guidelines to ensure that private landowners along the corridor are compensated promptly before they vacate their land.

She said under the guidelines, a 30% disturbance allowance will be given to the landowners, in addition to the full value of their land.

"On top of this, a 15% interest will be paid to the landowners, should compensation delay for more than a year after doing assessment on the said land, which we think is fair enough," she said.

Peter Kamalinding, the Oxfam Uganda country director, said they will continue to play a convening role to bring actors and experts together for meaningful conversations to ensure that people's rights are respected and the target achieved on time.